

## Contributions.

### HOW CAN WE INTEREST THE CHURCH MEMBERS IN CHURCH WORK?

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This question is constantly before the pastors and leaders of our churches in all denominations. In every congregation, large or small, it is the few, and not the many, who do the work of the church.

Why is this so?

Too many of our church members seem to think the church is a through sleeper, from earth to heaven, with a crew consisting of the pastor, the deacons, and perhaps the janitor, and all the rest are merely passengers with nothing to do but to enjoy the journey, each in their own way. Not only this, but many of them act as though they were travelling on a free pass and didn't even have to pay their fare, but expect to have a free ride straight up to the pearly gates, and a complimentary ticket to get inside. But I fear they will be disappointed at the end, unless they wake up and see their mistake. On this railroad every passenger must work his passage or he will be left far behind, long before the streets of the New Jerusalem are reached.

Is there nothing we can do to bring our own church up nearer the high standard? I think there is much that each one of us can do, for as the individual members are so will be the congregation, and as soon as each one will do their whole duty the question will be solved for the whole.

The very fact that we know we are in fault, puts us in the way of being righted, for the patient must first say, "I am sick" before he is ready for the physician. We are ready to acknowledge our disease; now for the remedy.

The best way to interest the church members in church work is to begin on the church members of to-morrow by interesting the "Juniors" of to-day. These are easily influenced, and if properly trained and cared for between times they will be the church workers of to-morrow. If this work, together with the young people's work, is pushed and wisely directed, in a few years the cry will not be, "how can we interest the members?" but "how can we keep this army of willing, earnest workers employed in the right way?" "How can we find work for all these young hands?" "How can we best marshal these forces so as to accomplish the most for Christ and the church?"

In these days no church is fully equipped for work without a Young People's Society—and a live Junior Society; for it is from these that the trained soldiers will

come. Not like the raw recruits we get from the world, who must needs be trained skillful workers, ready for any department of church work, except perhaps preaching a sermon; and very many will be ready even for this, for many of the preachers of to-morrow will learn to wield the "Sword of the Spirit," in the Young People's Society of to-day. Many of the boys and girls in our Junior and Young People's Societies are even now learning the lesson of the blessedness of a life consecrated to the Master's service. Many a Junior superintendent is sowing seeds of promise, in the fertile soil of youthful hearts, that shall spring up and bear fruit abundantly, even an hundred fold. For how readily does the truth take root in young hearts free from prejudice and worldliness.

We are shaping now, silently, but carefully the stones that shall be builded up into the glorious structure of the church of to-morrow: The temple of the living God! This temple shall differ somewhat from the one of to-day; its useless stones will be fewer, there will be fewer cracks marring the sightliness and strength of its walls, but each stone shall have its place, each fitting in as accurately as did the stones in Solomon's temple, each stone a pillar strengthening and supporting the whole.

One by one the old stones shall drop out and a new one shall take its place, until the old structure shall stand transformed before us. And each is "built upon the foundation of the apostles and the prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together, groweth into an holy temple in the Lord. In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit."

But while we are thus building for the church of to-morrow we must look well to the church of to-day. No bright prospects for the future can settle the problem of the present. How can we make the most of our present forces?

No bright vision of the church of to-morrow can do away with the fact that there remains in the church of to-day much unused material that could be used if only the right means were used. But how are we to reach this idle element, and make it a power for the Master? How can we awaken this army of professed Christians and set them to work for the cause to which they have promised allegiance?

The solution of this question lies mostly with the pastor and other religious workers, for it is according to their teaching that the church will be shaped. But

what shall we teach them in order to attain the best results?

Teach them that this religion of ours is a practical religion. That faith without works is dead. There is only one way of learning religion, and that is by practicing it. One way of knowing it: by living according to its precepts. This is the only way. Unless we do God's will nothing else can teach us this truth: "Herein is my Father glorified that ye bear much fruit, so shall ye be my disciples." There is no other way by which we may be his disciples except by having fruitful lives for him. No labor, no learning, no cleverness, no thought will enable us to find out any other way of discipleship. We may read our eyes blind in poring over our Bibles, it will only tell us: "Let your light so shine before men, that others may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven." This religion is a practical thing, and like all other practical things, we must learn it practically. Do you think that the service of the God of heaven is so much easier task than all others, that, while every thing must be learned slowly, and laboriously and practically that the doing of God's will, will come to us naturally and of itself. No, this too must be learned by practice—by patient, diligent, steadfast practice. God has ordained that we learn and perfect this religion in every deed that we do, in every thought and wish of our hearts.

Teach them that this religion demands our all. Most people are ready enough to admit the importance of religion. But important for what purpose and to what extent? To prepare us for our heavenly home? To assure us a title to a mansion above? We are looking forward to a heavenly home, to an eternal state of existence. It is reasonable enough, therefore, that we should pay attention to religious duties, and should devote certain times and seasons to the diligent care for our immortal souls. When, however, religion goes beyond this, and asserts her right to exercise a paramount control over our ordinary business and occupations: When she lays her hand upon every thought and word and action of our daily life, and claims us wholly for the Lord, then it is that men begin to resent her interference and ignore her claims. There is a growing tendency to separate our lives into two distinct departments, a secular and a religious. Religion, and all that pertains to her, is shut up into the one day of the week which we call the "Lord's Day," and our worldly affairs hold absolute control over the other six. Surely it is high time, that, in the name of God and God's truth we assert God's right to be paramount in all things. "Whatsoever we do, do all in the